

# Understanding Online Grooming



Online grooming is when someone uses the internet to build a relationship with a child and trick or coerce them into sexual acts.



## Where does it happen?

Groomers tend to search for online platforms that are frequented by children. These may include popular social media sites like TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat, as well as gaming platforms such as Minecraft, Fortnite, and Roblox. Groomers may also target streaming platforms like Twitch TV, as well as emerging virtual worlds like the metaverse, in order to find and gain the trust of potential victims.

## Does it only happen online?

No, Grooming happens in real life when an adult befriends a child with the intent of a sexual relationship. Once the child feels that the adult is a safe person, the adult pushes the child to take the relationship farther.



## What does grooming consist of?



Creating an emotional bond with the child



Having sexual conversations with a child online and over text



Sending or having the child send nude photos/videos



Blackmailing the child once nudes are sent so that the child will keep sending more

## Impacts on a child of grooming?



Depression



Guilt



Potential substance abuse



Withdrawing from social situations



Not knowing appropriate vs. inappropriate sexual behavior

## What can you do to prevent it?



Talk to your children about online grooming and the dangers of talking to strangers online.



Let your children know that they can come to you.



Install parental controls on devices



Report suspicious contacts to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Cyber Tip Line or 1-800-843-5678.



**Call 911**

If your child is in immediate danger.



**Human Trafficking Front**

Human Trafficking Front Campaign Putting an End to the Online Exploitation of Children: Preventing Victimization and Strengthening Child Protection Systems.



This program is funded in part by The Children's Trust. The Children's Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County.

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